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Swiss than Keller himself. Gottfried Keller's singular modesty in this and other controversies where it was a question of his country's future, the complete absence of self-seeking and doctrinaire contentiousness in even his most impassioned pleadings and warnings, recall to mind the superb characterization in his *Union of the Valiant Seven*, as that through which he himself would doubtless have preferred to be known and remembered:

'They are unblazed standing timber in the forest growth of the nation. They emerge for a moment into the sunlight of the fatherland's day, only to withdraw again into the shadow, where they rustle and murmur with the thousand other tree-trunks in their native forest glooms, where few claim acquaintance, but where all are familiarly and intimately known.'

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European Characters in French Drama of the Eighteenth Century.

By HARRY KURZ, PH. D. New York: Columbia University Press, 1916.

The title of the book is too general. It would imply a study of all characters in eighteenth century French drama, the non-European characters being entirely negligible. Yet, as the author explains, "the object of this study is to trace the opinions about foreign nations held by the French during the eighteenth century, in so far as the numerous comic writers of the time reflected these views in their plays." A less ambiguous title, then, would have been: "Foreigners as seen by French theatre-goers of the eighteenth century," a title which would better indicate the wide scope of the subject. In separate chapters, Dr. Kurz investigates how the eighteenth century dramatists treat the Italians, the Spanish, the Germans, the English, and the people of the Minor Nations.

The plays which include Italian characters bring out the latter only in a superficial way. Their only conclusion betraying a real observation of Italian life seems to be that conventions are strict and Italian wives are of the utmost fidelity.

From the study of Spanish characters even less is to be gleaned. The writers, apparently realizing their meager knowledge of contemporary Spain, often bring in historic Spain, though the atmos-

phere even there (as, for instance, in Destouches: *L'Ambitieux et l'Indiscrète*) is far from being essentially Spanish. A special section is devoted to the Spain of Beaumarchais. Why Dr. Kurz should do this is not clear, especially when, as he himself admits, "Beaumarchais is essentially French in his pictures and utters truths that are no more Spanish than French or English."

The burden of the thesis lies in the chapter on the English. The writer shows how, in 1734, the publication of Voltaire's *Lettres Philosophiques* laid the foundation in France of a lasting admiration for the English, and this in spite of numerous political conflicts, for as Dr. Kurz well points out, no English army ever set foot in France during this period, and the people felt no real animosity toward the English. Practically all the evidence brought forward goes to show how this admiration grew.

One English lord (Boissy: *Le Comte de Neuilly*) is shown devoting his life to the family of an exiled friend; another (Falbaire: *Le Fabricant de Londres*), unlike his care-free French brother, is a stern thinker. Many are represented as philanthropic and optimistic; many take pride in letters. Young Englishmen ape French ways and almost invariably speak excellent Parisian French. Even English actresses are pictured as being models of virtue. Englishmen fight no duels; and if they are taciturn and commonly appear to be suffering from melancholia, that is because they are deep thinkers. This characterization of thoughtfulness is constantly recurring and Dr. Kurz would have done well here to have advanced the explanation offered by Voltaire¹ that men are forced to think when they have the responsibilities of democratic government on their shoulders.

English merchants are represented as brusque but honest and benevolent. In 1727, one Jacques Rosbif (Boissy) makes the significant statement: "Les vrais gentilhommes ce sont les honnêtes gens il n'y a que le vice de roturier." Occasionally we find a quack physician or a deceitful clergyman; but usually Englishmen are portrayed as most virtuous. Jailers are generous and even the servants are absolutely devoted and trustworthy. English women are less coquettish than French women; more faithful as wives. "In England," to judge by Gresset's *Sidnei*, "a girl's conception of love is more basic and sincere."

¹ *Lettres Philosophiques*, xx.

Dr. Kurz has certainly collected enough evidence to prove that French theatre-goers of the eighteenth century considered England a sort of Utopia; but he is apparently content with presenting the picture. Not once does he inquire how far all this is true. As a matter of fact eighteenth century England was far from being a privileged land of virtue, the nobility was brutal and debauched, the clergy ignorant, the courts corrupt. Witness the depraved condition of high society as pictured by Fielding and other novelists of the time.² Recall also what Voltaire had to say about the grossness of the English stage.³

Dr. Kurz's findings are significant, then, not so much in showing just what eighteenth century Frenchmen really knew about England, but rather how they were deceived about it. As Joseph Texte puts it: "Les hommes du XVIII^e Siècle ont admiré une Angleterre idéale, parce qu'ils ont voulu qu'elle fût conforme à leur rêve."⁴ England was a land of liberty whence blew a "vent philosophique." Of course it is far from probable that the writers of these light plays wilfully deceived their audiences about England; most of them wrote with no other motive than to amuse. Dr. Kurz even expresses surprise (p. 301) that the comedies examined by him show so few traces of the "esprit philosophique," whereas the *opéras comiques* of the last part of the century were bristling with it and there were numerous "pièces à thèse" written to spread it.⁵ Yet, in so far as these writers did present an ideal picture of England, whether intentionally or unintentionally, they contributed no small part to the development of the "mouvement philosophique," by making the people turn an attentive ear towards England; and consequently they participated in no uncertain way in the formation of that mighty public opinion which was to overturn France. In this way, then, Dr. Kurz's findings may be said to contribute a chapter, by no means unimportant, to the history of "La Philosophie et le Théâtre" in the eighteenth century.

There are one or two faulty details in the book which should not pass unnoticed. For instance, when Mr. Kurz mentions eighteenth century novels characterized by their strong love of nature (p. 121) it is astonishing that he should have omitted *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, though he included *Atala*, which appeared in

² Cf. Forsyth, *Novels and Novelists*.

³ *Lettres Philosophiques*, XIX.

⁴ *Le Cosmopolitisme Littéraire*, p. 114.

⁵ Cf. Voltaire, *Nanine*.

1801. Then his argument that Englishmen and Spaniards of that day spoke French without an accent, simply because he finds them using elegant French in these light comedies, seems rather naïve. The typographical errors are remarkably few: (119) Political Psychology (for *psychology*): (167) leur sciences (for *science*) les charge; (192) English pays (for *plays*); (303) forcement (for *forcément*).

As to content, Mr. Kurz has amassed an enormous amount of material, having read and analyzed more than 120 plays. It is to be regretted, however, that he did not make more capital out of it by going one step further and inquiring just why eighteenth century French comic writers displayed such great admiration for the English. It is also most unfortunate that the work is not more compact. A considerable part of the material, indeed, seems to have been included only to prove its own uselessness either as an interesting set of documents or as a help to the general thesis.

As to style, while it is true that in this respect the book is not unlike many other doctor's dissertations, still it is deeply to be deplored that good, solid work, worthy of a doctor of philosophy, should be marred by not being presented in uniformly dignified English.

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Forschungen zur deutschen Theatergeschichte des Mittelalters und der Renaissance, von Max Herrmann. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1914.

This work by Max Herrmann consists of two quite distinct parts, a study in detail of the staging, costuming, and acting on Hans Sachs' stage, and a critical study of the drama illustrations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. About one hundred and twenty of these are reproduced, a valuable feature of the work, made possible by financial support from the Director General of the Royal Theaters. These two investigations make a book of over five hundred pages with an abundance of interesting conclusions, such an abundance as to discourage detailed review and criticism.

Herrmann's reconstruction of Hans Sachs' stage is only a reconstruction of the stage in the Martha Church, in which his plays